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[For discussion of the issue of incipient social classes among the Blackfoot, see both categories (i.e., 556 and 565).]

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[For information on socio-cultural differences between rich and poor segments of the Blood population and the traits which characterize each, see Category 184.]

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

point here is that these powers and their symbols were subject to the same controls as any other property. A man, therefore, incurred both rights and obligations with the attainment of power. He was expected to be generous with it, but at the same time he expected to be paid in goods or prestige for the help he gave.

The Blackfeet believed that the possession of a guardian spirit and power were important for success, so such powers and the bundles that represented them were highly valued. Not all men were successful in their vision quest, but this was not held against them. They were just unlucky. Neither they nor anyone else expected much of them, however, and they could hardly advance in prestige without some successes. Such men might be motivated to gain property to enable them to purchase power from someone who had had the experience, and men with power often sought to transfer it because it was a restricted and often burdensome property. As with other kinds of property, the bundle owner was expected to be generous with his power. Bundles had to be opened periodically, and the owner had to provide a feast for invited guests as a part of the ritual. In addition, the bundle owner had to observe a number of taboos associated with each bundle—it had to be displayed properly, no one should walk between the bundle and its owner, and numerous restrictions were put on the owner's behavior. Some men owned several bundles, but whether one or many, some owners found the responsibilities, expenses and taboos too burdensome and sought buyers for their power.

Values and Status

Perhaps, as already indicated, one of the most persistent themes of Blackfeet life was the high value put on individual prestige, a value that operated through and maintained a status structure. This was not a true class society with easily recognized social divisions, but a structure of status positions, each shading into a higher one. The high status people were distinguished readily from those of low status, but the separations along the line might be imperceptible.[5] The whole system was an expression of Blackfeet values, and the highest status was achieved by the man who best represented these ideals.

The major characteristics valued by the Blackfeet and by which men were judged appear to have been bravery, generosity, wisdom, and skill; these were displayed in warfare, horse raiding, hunting, religious knowledge and the acquisition of property for use in the service of others.

It is difficult to establish a hierarchy of the importance of these different attributes. Bravery and generosity appear to have been essential. The ethnographers differ in their ordering of exploits by which a reputation for bravery was established, but all agree that war honors were ranked, and that the killing and scalping of an enemy ranked below the more dangerous feats of successfully wresting the weapons from an enemy and escaping without injury, or stealing into the center

[5] Ewers believes that social classes were forming in the late 1880s under the influence of horse ownership. A small rich class, a numerous middle class, and a number of poor were recognized, grounded in respect for individual rights and property rights (Ewers 1955:240–244).

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Status

Introduction

THE NATURE AND SEPARATENESS of the two orientation systems are illustrated in this chapter by a review of the status patterns within each group. People conform to a particular set of norms and adopt the related values of the group with which they wish to identify, and acquire a higher or lower status within the group according to how well they exhibit valued characteristics. The status systems of the two orientation groups are examined here to identify areas of contrast and to suggest the nature of intragroup leadership and social organization.

Economic achievement plays a more important role in defining status among the white-oriented people that it does among the Indian-oriented, and a man's house is one important symbol of how well he is doing economically. I use housing, therefore, in my discussion of status among the white-oriented group, but do not give similar treatment to Indian-oriented housing because they do not give this much weight in judging their peers. In the proper place I will describe some Indian-oriented homes and then take the opportunity to point out some characteristics of home furnishing and maintenance that seem to follow from the differing values of the two groups. The general economic and housing conditions on the reservation must be remembered, however, to avoid making hasty inferences.

The visitor to the reservation sees much substandard housing which he is apt to register in his head as "Indian housing." He is right in one sense; most of the houses are occupied by tribal members, but he is in error if he thinks that this is the kind of housing the Blackfeet prefer. The descriptions in Chapter 4 should have made it clear that poverty and poor housing are both prevalent, and while these two tend to go hand in hand, home construction on the reservation has been hindered greatly because trust lands could not be mortgaged, as well as for lack of money. The present housing programs have taken a decade or more of planning, land purchase, condemnations, and financial maneuvering to get under

[i.e., White vs. Indian orientation--Analyst]

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

way and are just beginning to allow the abandonment of some hundreds of shanties, shacks, and cabins that have accumulated over the past half-century.

My analysis of the economic data gathered from my sample clearly demonstrated widespread poverty, but not everybody is poor—there are relatively affluent people both among the Indian- and white-oriented groups. The differences within each group are probably greater than those between them, but the average standing of Indian-oriented people, as a whole, is lower than that of the white-oriented (McFee 1962:120–124). To the extent that there is a positive correlation between income and housing, then, it is to be expected that a higher percentage of the Indian-oriented live in substandard housing than do the white-oriented. In what follows, then, I assume that adequate housing is desired by all and difficult to come by regardless of cultural orientation: the maintenance and furnishing of whatever kind of house people live in, however, does seem to me to be a fair indicator of some of the value differences described in the preceding chapter. This is what I will be talking about when I mention housing.

It should also be remembered that my sample was male so that much of what follows may reflect a male emphasis. Women play an integral part in establishing the status of the family. They maintain the homes, raise the children, and often contribute to the family income as well. All in all their influence often may be more important than that of the men in status achievement. A study of women and their role in reservation life is sorely needed.

Status among the White-Oriented

The white-oriented society can be divided roughly into three status classes: low, middle, and high. Class boundaries are indistinct, but high status can be distinguished from low, while the middle class shades imperceptibly into the two extremes forming what Stern, in his Klamath study so aptly called a "status gradient" (Stern 1966:214ff).

WHITE-ORIENTED LOW STATUS Low status people generally, are the least educated and least trained in the skills essential to regular employment. Consequently they are often irregularly employed, live in poor houses, dress poorly, and have few possessions. Poverty is a condition shared by low status people of both groups.

White and white-oriented people tend to lump low status people together regardless of orientation. While this is reasonable by many criteria, such judgments overlook cultural factors that make a white-oriented man different than his Indian-oriented counterpart. These distinguishing characteristics will be seen more clearly in the later discussion of the low status Indian-oriented.

The low status stratum encompasses a range from hard working, but irregularly employed men at the top, to a few improvident individuals at the bottom of the scale. The more ambitious of this class actively seek work and are considered to be good workers by those who know them. However, the jobs they find are seasonal and provide insufficient income for economic stability.

In general, low status men express little commitment to success and prog-

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Sub-standard housing. Note the evidence of attension to interior housekeeping and the definition of a yard.

ress. One of the men interviewed had gone to Denver under a federal relocation program, but found the work too difficult so returned to his family. Another remarked that the relocation program was intended to help the Indian find work. He, with an average annual income of $2,250, had thought about going on relocation, but never applied. "I don't have much trouble getting a job," he said.

None of the low status men I interviewed own their own homes. Two talked about fixing things up around the houses they occupied but have not made improvements that would be expected if they were concerned about material comfort. Housing appears to be poor and inadequate when eight to eleven people live in a two room shack. In 1960 I visited a man who had lived with his wife and eight children in a house owned by one of his relatives. This was an old, two-room, unpainted structure with shiplap outer walls that had been patched here and there with plyboard. Some of the original asphalt roof remained visible among the many patches that had been applied over the years. The ceiling and some of the interior walls were covered with wallboard, others with cardboard. A single light bulb suspended from the ceiling by its cord hung in each room. Well worn linoleum covered the floors. The rooms were simply furnished: a wooden table, wooden chairs, an old overstuffed chair, a kitchen storage cabinet, two fiberboard wardrobes, a chest of drawers, three double beds, and a crib. A wall-hung kitchen sink with a cold water tap was the extent of interior plumbing; a wood range served for both cooking and heating.

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

served for both cooking and heating. Family photographs, two Charles Russell prints, dishes, family keepsakes, a radio, a throw rug, and a few other possessions were on display. The interior of the house was crowded, but neat, orderly, and well-scrubbed; the exterior was stained, cracked, and in disrepair. A sagging fence partially marked off a yard area between the house and an outdoor toilet. Two shrubs grew as evidence of an early attempt to garden and there was considerable debris scattered about the dirt and weeds that made up the yard. To me there appeared to be much that needed to be done to make the place livable, yet when I asked this man, seasonally employed with an income of about $2,500, about the availability of federal or tribal home improvement loans, I was told: "Yes they have a setup for that. I guess we could get a loan like that if we needed it." I do not know if this family still lives in this house, but it is there today. The only visible changes through the years have been further deterioration and the addition of a television antenna.

When asked about future plans, these men have little to offer. They express little expectation beyond returning to the old job, or finding a similar one, each spring. The inference is that they are not dissatisfied with present conditions. Family responsibilities, lack of credit, uncertain employment, the weather and the seasons are the factors that govern the economic condition of the low status men. It is unlikely that these men can be "successful" but they try; the idlers are those who have given up.

The improvident ones, at the bottom of the scale have lost any initiative they once might have had. Most of these, like their Indian-oriented counterparts, are called "winos" and "bums" by their fellow townsmen. Some are alcoholics in fact, others in name only. These men are community problem cases—the concern of the police and welfare authorities.

Yet these men are white-oriented in spite of the apparent lack of commitment to the values of their group. First of all, they are not Indian-oriented. They know little or nothing of Indian language or customs and do not take part in Indian social activities, nor do they seek Indian identity. Secondly, the low status white-oriented persons have the knowledge and habits of their group. They are peripheral participants in the economic, political, and social life of their community. Those who work are rewarded with the accolade, "a good worker," which puts them on a rung above the improvident on the status ladder. But they have little influence or social standing. Low status people do not run for political offices; they are neither members of service clubs or other organizations, nor do they take part in the P.T.A., Youth Club, Boy or Girl Scout, or 4-H Club work. Low status persons spend their spare time with members of their families or with others of similar status. Reported recreational activities include hunting and fishing, card games with neighbors or family, an occasional movie, driving around in a car with friends, and drinking.

Low income, irregular labor, and limited participation are the interrelated characteristics that most clearly separate the low from the middle status. Lack of training contributes to a low income; poverty, in turn, limits both self-improvement and social participation.

WHITE-ORIENTED MIDDLE STATUS The middle status white-oriented class

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

includes the majority of the white-oriented group and, in reality, is more a convenient collection of a series of gradually changing ranks than it is a single status position. The people who occupy these status positions, however, share a few general characteristics: they are (1) regularly employed, (2) committed to individual progress, (3) active participants in community affairs, and (4) they clearly support and exemplify the white-oriented values.

Individuals in this classification represent a wide range of economic and social achievement. Occupations of middle status people range from regularly employed craftsmen through clerical workers in business, agency, and council to businessmen, politicians, small farmers, and ranchers. Not all are financially independent, but all are building toward that goal. This is a characteristic that stands out in the interview materials. These people think about their future and the future of their children—they have plans for tomorrow. It shows in "Bob Sorrel Horse's dream" reported by a poor white-oriented full-blood rancher, who, by his industry may just qualify for middle status even though his annual cash income seldom exceeds $2,000:

> I have this dream to get some money and fix this place up right—a nice house and a good place. First, I'd get electricity in to pump the water. I had planned to remodel the house . . . to have a place I'm not ashamed of.

Yet while he dreams, this man acts. He cared for his small herd of thirteen head of cattle and a few horses, had a sound shelter and well-maintained corrals for the stock. The grounds around the house were uncluttered, all garbage and debris was in one pile some distance from the house. A good supply of firewood was cut and stacked near the house. A clothesline, outhouse, and small utility shed were all in good order.

The house in which six people lived was an old log structure with two rooms on the ground floor and one loft room above. It was well chinked and the old hand split shake roof was in good repair. Water was carried from a pitcher pump mounted at the well a few feet from the cabin door; there was no electricity and gas lanterns provided the light. A wood range provided the heat. The interior walls were painted, cotton curtains hung at the windows and a worn rug covered part of the linoleum floor. The home furnishings consisted of a painted washstand, wooden table, wooden chairs, a kitchen cupboard, one double and two single beds, homemade closets, a nightstand, and a high chair. Family photos, a calendar, a radio, two rifles, fishing gear, and other family possessions were to be seen. The children's bicycle, tricycles, wagon, and a stroller were stored in the shed out back. A zinc washtub hanging outside on the front wall of the cabin provided the clue to the laundry facilities. Everything was worn, clean, orderly and in good repair. This man was poor, yet he maintained what he had and dreamed of something better in the future.

At the upper end of the scale, this same concern for the future is expressed by the well-to-do rancher, quoted in the earlier chapter, who built up his ranch for the boys and was concerned that the youngest son had no future with the railroad.

Middle status people join the service clubs, farm and cattle associations

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

and support and participate in community improvement projects. The leaders of F.F.A., 4-H, Boy and Girl Scouts, and the Youth Club are either whites or tribal members of this class. These people sponsor the Easter Egg Hunts, the Fishing Derbies, local sports events, and often the rodeos. They are not always the leaders, but are the active supporters of community, church, and school enterprises.

Middle status people are active politically. Tribal council positions and a few county elective offices are sought and often won by people of this classification, and they are actively supported or opposed, advised or criticized, by their peers.

People of middle status tend to live in well-constructed, well-maintained

Two kinds of rural housing.

homes. For example, Ray Hawkins, whose annual income was about $3,500, lived with his wife and four children in a four room frame house. It was freshly painted inside and out and the composition roof was in good condition at the time of my visit. There was a fenced yard, with lawn and flower beds, an outdoor fireplace and a picnic table. This house had electricity, inside plumbing with both hot and cold water supplied to the bathroom and kitchen. The interior walls were all lined and painted; the floors were wooden, covered with cotton rugs in the living room and bedrooms and with linoleum in the kitchen and bath. The comparatively large kitchen had built-in cabinets around and over the sink, an electric range and refrigerator, a heavy dining table, and solid wood chairs. There were cotton curtains at the windows. The bedrooms had built-in closets, beds and chests of drawers. The living room was well furnished with a fairly new davenport and living room chairs, each with its antimacassar. There was a coffee table, an ottoman, a piano, table lamps, a record player, and a radio. The windows were draped

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

and family photographs, some of the children's art work, music, and numerous books were on display.

Not all middle status persons have good homes, but evidence of improvement is apparent in the houses they do have. This may amount to anything from a fresh coat of paint on interior walls to a new roof, a new entryway, or the addition of one or more rooms. When I reviewed the data from my sample, I noted that two of the fourteen homes of white-oriented middle status sample members were scored excellent and nine good. The middle status people do not all plant lawns and gardens, but with rare exceptions, all lawns and gardens on the reservation are planted by middle or high status white or white-oriented people.

Home improvement, and a tendency toward the acquisition of more appliances and other possessions with increased income, demonstrate the underlying values of acquisitiveness and material comfort. White-oriented people, above the low status category, buy, use, and care for more home furnishings and appliances. A middle-class American would recognize an air of material comfort that goes beyond utility, memorabilia, and decoration, and differs in this respect from the average Indian-oriented home regardless of financial condition. This elusive and hard to define impression may become clearer by contrast with Indian-oriented homes described later.

The white-oriented tend to identify home and possessions with family status. One white community leader, acquainted with sociological literature, assessed the class positions of the town, and used home improvement as a key to attempted upward mobility. Even Indian-oriented people are aware of this "have things" aspect of white living. An Indian who acquires too many appliances and other home furnishings is accused of "trying to live like a white man."

WHITE-ORIENTED HIGH STATUS Highest status among the white-oriented persons is held by a few men or families who own large farms or ranches, or operate successful businesses. In most respects they resemble the middle status people in that they are industrious, ambitious, acquisitive, and active in community affairs. These people, however, stand out for their greater success. They are financially independent, have larger, well-maintained, and better furnished homes like that of Henry Rogers described in Chapter 1. They are leaders in community enterprises and politics and, further, they meet on more equal terms with the white business leaders of the community and region.

In addition to the economic and social attributes just mentioned, these men share a broad knowledge of men and events beyond the local scene. Their interests lead them into contact with men of like interests beyond the reservation and county boundaries. They have traveled widely and have a lively interest in American history, politics, and business affairs.

The economic independence attained by these men has left them freer to pursue other affairs. They can afford to spend more time in public service work. All have become interested in improving the conditions of the reservation population. I mentioned earlier the two who had learned about Blackfeet culture in later life, and display a great interest in the Indians. They know this culture intellectually but have not internalized an Indian point of view. These people have white values and goals and, whether they realize it or not, are working to change

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

565 177 the Indians toward a greater acceptance of white ways. Like the government officials, they feel that the opportunity for steady work and a good education will solve most of the problems faced by the Indian. Remember, too, Henry Rogers' idea that the council should buy some grass and flower seed to give to all the 565 362 351 householders in town. He and other high status people are pleased that the low rent and mutual aid housing programs include lawns in the plans. His suggestion and these plans are realistic from the point of view of those who subscribe to white-oriented values, but overlook the fact that the Indians do not share these same values. It will be interesting to watch the results of the planting programs to see whether or not the Indian-oriented occupants care to maintain these lawns.

177 The man I called Harry Wilson has a different view of the Indian because of what he learned about Blackfeet culture as a child during the few years he spent with his Indian stepgrandfather on a Canadian reserve. Before and after this visit, he was raised in a completely white-oriented home, but as a consequence of this training and the considerable participation in Indian society that it allowed, he has a deeper understanding of the Indian-oriented people. His idea 186 of service is to help them maintain their own culture. He is able to take part in their ritual and social activities, but serves primarily at a managerial level with the local and national committees that promote pan-Indian celebrations, arts and crafts. This man is white-oriented, but has had experience that enables him to empathize with the Indian. He helps the Indian-oriented to affirm their traditions, while others of his class can only affirm their own and try to help the Indians by changing them.

177 Perhaps because of their greater association with white people, the high status white-oriented, and a few in the class below who approach this status, are the ones most conscious of social discrimination or at least most vocal about it. I asked everybody I interviewed about this and people at this social level had the strongest feelings about it. The complaints were less about discrimination in the economic sphere than about social slights. One man stated that everyone gets on well until some white businessman's daughter becomes too interested in a mixed-blood boy. The white parents soon step in and break it up. A woman complained that she was never invited to local women's meetings, teas, or other parties, and a study of membership and attendance lists for social groups sponsored by the white business people and agency employees appears to support her contention. The high status white-oriented person is economically and culturally the same as many of his white neighbors. He aspires, and is qualified, to be fully accepted. Away from home he meets little discrimination but, like the man mentioned earlier who became the liquor store manager, his Indian heritage is often held against him in the local and neighboring towns. This discrimination, felt strongly by the persons most nearly integrated into the American society, emphasizes again that the major difference between the white-oriented segment of the tribe and other American people around them is due to their being legally defined Indians, members of an Indian tribe, who live on a reservation. Their white neighbors too easily stereotype all Indians and discriminate against them accordingly without understanding any of them or noting individual differences among them.

186 It must be noted that the Blackfeet too are caught up in the racist beliefs

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

that are so prevalent in our society. In general, they dislike blacks, foreigners, and, of course, whites. Some Indians expressed dismay when they found that fair housing laws meant that whites could not be excluded from the tribally sponsored but federally funded low rent housing. This observation is made as a part of the description and is in no way intended to excuse discrimination against the Indians.

The status levels of the white-oriented community reflect the scale by which white or white-oriented people assess themselves and their neighbors, and these are congruent with the status patterns of the region, as I explained in a footnote to my earlier report (McFee 1962:178). The white-oriented people are socially, politically, economically and culturally, a part of the mainstream of American life.

As the white-oriented share status and value systems with the white people, they tend to assess the Indians by these same standards. The white-oriented person will tend to place an Indian-oriented person in a class just below his own even when they are equal in most other respects. The improvident Indian is ranked lower than the improvident white. White-oriented people measure all others by their own standards, in relation to themselves and their kind.

The Indian-oriented person, however, sees the relative status of the tribal members from quite a different perspective. Social worth is measured by different standards in Indian-oriented society, and the standards reflect commitment to other values.

Status among the Indian-Oriented

The people of one segment of the Blackfeet Tribe consider themselves the real Blackfeet Indians and dedicate themselves to being Indian. Toward this end they share elements of culture that differ from that of the surrounding population and associate most frequently with people of like orientation. The group has its own measures of status based upon expressions of the values supported by its members, and because of differing goals and values, the status system of the Indian-oriented is incongruent with that of the white-oriented society. The Indian judges his group and the whole tribal population by another standard that results in a dissimilar ranking.

For present purposes the same threefold classification of status—low, middle, and high—is used, but the positions are discussed in another order. In Indian-oriented society, high status is achieved by the attainment of prestige and influence through behaviors that express the values of the group. This is the same general principle that operates among the white-oriented society, but the bicultural situation, in which the Indian-oriented are an economically and politically dependent minority, has opened two avenues to higher status for Indian-oriented people. Low status people are relatively homogeneous, middle status less so, and the high status category can be split into the two types based upon knowledge of and proficiency in the white man's world. Because of this the high status classes are described first, then the low status, followed by a brief description of the large middle class that, by its judgments and support, make or breaks people's status claims. The discus-

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

177 183 homes, furnishings, and equipment that contribute to economic independence, material comfort, and serve also to symbolize, both to the individual and others, the degree of success achieved.

Persons of this orientation associate mainly with people of similar orientation and aspire toward full participation in white society. Such aspirations often are thwarted both because white people identify the white-oriented with an Indian stereotype, and they too see themselves as "Indians" in opposition to "white men" when the privileges of Indian status are under attack. The aspirations are realistic, however, because in most respects the white-oriented segment of the Blackfeet tribe differs little from the majority section of American society.

177 565 A brief investigation of the status system within this group revealed a pattern similar to the general American class structure. Like most other Americans, white-oriented people make their judgments of individual worth according to standards introduced and maintained by the dominant society. One can conclude that the white-oriented society among the Blackfeet is organized around a series of class norms. An individual who aspires to belong to this society will find social support to the extent that he approximates the behavior set by these norms and displays a commitment to the values of the group.

Indian-Oriented Society

177 183 The patterns of the Indian-oriented group stand out clearly despite the many features shared with both white and white-oriented society, and especially in the areas of contrasting premises and values. The major goal of this group is 177 183 to retain its ethnic identity as shown by the attachment these people have to things and practices that symbolize Indian-ness. Traditional definitions of the good person, and particularly the value placed upon generosity, persist and serve as both symbols 186 of being Indian, and a check against the achievement necessary for full economic integration with the dominant society.

177 183 This goal tends to make the Indian-oriented Blackfeet present rather than future oriented. They asserted tradition, a tradition made up of remembered Blackfeet culture, borrowed pan-Indian elements and incorporated elements from white culture, but this is not to be interpreted as living in the past. The future is uncertain for most Indian-oriented people; past experience has made them suspicious of long range plans. Consequently the tendency is to avoid risking present positions for unknown future benefits, to live each day as it comes and to remember real and legendary better days of the past.

[554] [565] The Blackfeet Indian-oriented society is organized in conformity to these norms and expectations. A man is judged by his display of Indian traits and particularly by how generous he is with the fruits of his achievement. Expressions of such judgments were recorded and used to construct a scale of status, from low to high, and the resulting class structure appeared little related to similar levels in both the general American society and the white-oriented Blackfeet group.

[554] Of particular importance, as an indication of Indian-oriented accommoda-

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

THE HORSE AS A FACTOR IN SOCIAL RELATIONS

SOCIAL STATUS

421 A century and a half ago David Thompson (1916, p. 363) observed that the Piegan possessed "an inherent sense of the rights of individuals to their rights of property, whether given them, or acquired by industry, or in hunting. All these belong to the person who is in possession of them; and which gives him the right to defend any attempt to take them from him." Individual ownership of all property other than land was the rule among the three Blackfoot tribes. 422 Even sacred bundles, such as the natoas or Sun Dance bundle, the beaver bundle, and the medicine pipe bundle, which were manipulated for the good of the whole community, were individually owned and were transferred from one individual to another through elaborate ceremonies. Individual ownership of horses followed the Blackfoot pattern of ownership of other property.[75]

556 Blackfoot social stratification was grounded in respect for the right of the individual to own and to accumulate property. In historic 565 times social stratification followed the economic status of the family head, whose wealth was determined primarily in terms of horse ownership. Three Calf stated that in his youth there were three classes among the Blackfoot: the rich, the poor, and the "in between" (middle class). Other informants frequently mentioned the two extremes without naming the middle class specifically. The classes may be briefly characterized as follows.

THE RICH

A man who owned some 40 or more horses was considered wealthy. This number of animals was more than ample to meet his normal family needs for horses to move his possessions and obtain food through hunting. His horses provided the means of acquiring a plentiful food supply, either through his own efforts or through those of other men to whom he loaned horses for buffalo hunting. Moreover, he obtained sufficient food surplus to enable him to entertain through feasts following a successful hunt and still permit his women folk to prepare extensive supplies of pemmican and dried meat in the fall

[114] [75] Goldfrank's (1945, p. 6) informant who spoke of "band horses," either was misinformed or did not mean what he was reported to have said. The concept of community ownership of horses was foreign to Blackfoot economic theory and practice.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

for winter subsistence. His many horses were the means of transporting surplus foods, one or more large lodges, and many other bulky possessions. His surplus of robes were exchanged at the trading posts for the most improved weapons, metal tools and household utensils, ornaments and trade cloth. He and members of his family dressed well. They owned several changes of clothing including expensive and elaborately decorated dress outfits. Their saddles and riding gear were well made and showy. He possessed the means to purchase membership in men's societies, to obtain important sacred bundles through ceremonial transfers, and to pay leading medicine men to care for sick members of his family. If his favorite wife had the moral qualifications she could reasonably anticipate an opportunity to play the role of medicine woman in the Sun Dance of the tribe. He and his sons could marry well, could have a large choice of mates and could support several wives. Before he died he could make a verbal will dividing his wealth among his children to provide for their continued enjoyment of his many advantages.

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Through careful management of his breeding stock he could increase his horse herds and hence his wealth. Yet he lived in constant fear of losing his horses from an enemy raid. Three Calf told of his father's loss of his entire herd through capture by an enemy raiding party. His father died not long afterward and friends said his death was due to his grief over the loss of his horses. Whether the grief was due primarily to his love for the stolen animals or to his feeling of loss of status and lowered standard of living after the horses were gone, is not clear. Probably both factors were involved.

There is evidence that wiser heads saw the folly of storing up treasure in horses alone. Buffalo Back Fat, head chief of the Blood tribe at the time of George Catlin's visit to Fort Union in 1832, handed down this sage advice to members of his family. It was remembered by Three Calf, a descendant of that chief:

> Don't put all your wealth in horses. If all your horses are taken from you one night by the enemy, they won't come back to you. You will be destitute. So be prepared. Build up supplies of fine, clean clothing, good weapons, sacred bundles and other valuable goods. Then, if some enemy takes all your horses, you can use your other possessions to obtain the horses you need.
>
> Call in the son of a man who owns a lot of fine horses. Offer the lad something valuable—a shield, a beautiful suit of clothes or some sacred object. The boy may not want it for himself but he will tell his father. When his father hears of your offer he will bring fine horses to obtain transfer of title to the proffered object. You can continue in this way to rebuild your herd by disposing of other valuable possessions.
>
> Furthermore, you will be sure of acquiring horses of the very best quality with which to start your herd anew. You know that when a man seeks to obtain a bundle or other valuable object every one in camp, his rivals as well as his relatives, knows about it and watches to see what he is offering in exchange.

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9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

556 565 So he will make a show of liberality by offering the best horses he has. Any other property he may offer along with the horses will be of the best quality—blankets, robes, guns or other articles.

Wissler (1912 a, p. 276) found that the prestige gained from ownership of sacred bundles was never lost. "Even though one may fall a victim to utter poverty, he may still, if the ex-owner of many bundles, be spoken of as wealthy and powerful." The wealthy man who was also kind and generous need never fear reduction to abject poverty through loss of his horses. His many friends and relatives would give him horses to care for the needs of his household."[171] However, the wealthy man who was stingy was genuinely disliked by his fellow men. Generosity was felt to be a responsibility of the wealthy. They were expected to loan horses to the poor for hunting and moving camp, to give food to the poor, and to give away horses occasionally. They were expected to pay more in intratribal barter than were Indians who were not well to do. If the man of wealth had political ambitions it was particularly important that he be lavish with his gifts in order to gain a large number of followers to support his candidacy.

556 577

565 556 162 In numbers the wealthy comprised by far the smallest of the three Blackfoot social classes. It is doubtful if they totaled 5 percent of the Blackfoot population in buffalo days.

THE MIDDLE CLASS

565 556 The middle-class Blackfoot owned from 5 to less than 40 horses. He was economically independent, possessing enough horses to hunt buffalo and move camp. Generally he could obtain adequate meat for his family, although many middle-class families could prepare and transport little winter reserve. He lived in a smaller lodge and entertained much less frequently or lavishly than the rich man. He had fewer robes to trade and consequently received less of the trader's desirable goods. Yet he tried, to the best of his ability to follow the styles set by people of wealth in clothing, ornaments, weapons, tools, household utensils, riding, and transport gear. But his possessions were fewer and, unless his wife or wives were expert and industrious craftswomen, his possessions usually were less elaborate than those of wealthy men. With the help of relatives he could muster horses and other costly items necessary to purchase a valuable sacred bundle. But, as Wissler (1912 a, p. 277) has stated, it was only the wealthy who could purchase large or important bundles without help.

[162] In numbers the middle class comprised the largest of the three Blackfoot classes, and the majority of the population. This class

[171] "Denig said of the Crow, "If a man has all his horses stolen or killed, he can generally find friends to give him others, tho the giver expects payment when the receiver shall have retrieved his horses or be able to pay in some way" (Denig, 1953, p. 32).

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

graded almost imperceptibly into the wealthy class at the top and the poor class at the bottom. Loss of a portion of their herd from an enemy raid could reduce many a middle-class family to poverty.

THE POOR

At the bottom of the economically determined social scale were the poor. They were far more numerous than the wealthy, but less numerous than the middle class. At times they may have numbered 25 percent of the total population. Poor families were dependent upon their relatives or band leaders for even the economic essentials. They borrowed horses to move camp or used dogs for transport animals. They borrowed horses to hunt or received food from the more fortunate. Even their small homes often were the tops of old lodges discarded by wealthy owners, cut down to a size the poor people could transport. The poor family, owning less than 5 horses, had few other possessions. This family was easily recognized by the smallness of its lodge and the shabby appearance of its clothing, transport gear, household utensils, and weapons. Generally the poor owned no fancy dress clothing. Their parfleches were old, worn, and greasy; their rectangular rawhide bags unfringed. The poor man's gun, if he owned one, was generally an old muzzle-loader, broken and tied together with buckskin cord.

Undoubtedly, if the poor man had pride or ambition, he suffered greater mental anguish than physical discomfort. Fellow tribesmen saw to it that he did not starve. Yet he realized that he made a poor appearance among his people and that he owned none of the desirable possessions of members of the upper and middle classes. His self-respect suffered through inability to participate actively in many facets of Blackfoot life. He could not purchase important sacred bundles or membership in a society. His desires and opinions carried no weight in decisions involving band and tribal movements. His marriage prospects were very limited. The aged poor were sometimes left behind when camp was moved owing to lack of adequate transport facilities.

Yet the lot of the poor in horses was no worse among the Blackfoot than among the majority of other nomadic tribes and the horticultural tribes as well.[77]

Ferris (1940, p. 300) writing of the Indians of the northern Rockies prior to 1835, stated:

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[77] Dorsey and Murie (1940, p. 115) estimated that the poor among the Skidi Pawnee comprised "less than one-half the members." They were "without influence or power, their lodges were smaller and not so completely furnished, they had few or no ponies, and were often the objects of charity." In 1840, Tixier (1940, p. 135) observed that among the Osage "there are poor people; and those who are poor have no horses, no means of hunting the bison in order to secure meat. They own neither huts nor blankets; they live, so to speak, at the expense of the community."

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

565 556 171 Some of the poorer classes, who do not possess horses, and are consequently unable to follow the buffalo in the prairies, ascend the mountains where deer, and sheep are numerous, and pass their lives in single families—are never visited by the horsemen of the plains, but sometimes descend to them, and exchange the skins of those animals for robes, and other articles of use and ornament.

175 556 565 184 Probably Ferris was referring to horseless Shoshoneans. Nevertheless, Alexander Henry (Henry and Thompson, 1897, vol. 2, p. 723) in describing the Piegan in 1811, observed:

There are 30 or 40 tents who seldom resort to the plains, either in summer or winter, unless scarcity of animals or some other circumstance obliges them to join their countrymen. This small band generally inhabit the thick, woody country along the foot of the mountains, where they kill a few beavers, and being industrious, they are of course better provided for than those Piegans who dwell on the plains.

My informant, Richard Sanderville, believed these were the ancestors of the North Piegan who now reside on a separate reserve west of Macleod, Alberta. The "North Piedgans" were named as a distinct band in 1850 (Culbertson, 1851, p. 144). In late buffalo days they still held their own Sun Dance and were recognized as skilled hunters and trappers of small game. Although by Henry's time these Indians were profiting from the fur trade and no longer appeared poor in comparison with the other Piegan, it is possible that their semiseparation from the main Piegan tribe may have been caused by poverty in horses at an earlier date, which made it difficult for them to live by hunting buffalo on the Plains in competition with other Piegan bands better supplied with horses.

CHANGES IN SOCIAL STATUS

565 556 In so far as the individual was concerned the Blackfoot system of social status was not crystallized. It offered no positive security to the wealthy. Overnight, as result of an enemy raid or a severe winter storm the rich man might lose his wealth in horses. There was always opportunity for the poor boy, who was also courageous and ambitious, to better his status. As Wissler (1912, pp. 288–289) observed, "the rich young dandies" did "not always turn out the greatest war chiefs, for it has often happened that poor young men have gone on the warpath, captured horses, bought fine clothes, and medicine bundles and become leaders among their people." Informants said ambitious boys of poor families generally started to war at an early age, were frequent participants in horse raids, and were inclined to take the most desperate chances. A few of these men became wealthy, many became respected members of the middle class, some never were successful in acquiring many horses, and others lost their lives in skirmishes with the enemy. The road from rags to riches via the horse-capture route was a long and perilous one.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Another avenue of advancement for the poor boy was through service to a wealthy man, in caring for his horses, and helping him in hunting in return for his own food and care. Orphans commonly were taken into this service (Grinnell, 1892, p. 219).

Adoption into a family of wealth and distinction offered another means of advancement for the poor boy. Three Calf cited the case of a little boy found by Boy, a chief of the Small Robes band of Piegan, in an abandoned Gros Ventres camp. Although Boy had children of his own, he adopted the homeless waif. When the lad grew older he cared for Boy's horses. Later he helped in hunting and went on horse-raiding parties. He was successful in taking enemy horses and once took a gun from an enemy. He began to raise a herd of his own. He married a girl of good family, set up a medium-sized lodge, and raised fine pinto horses. He began to acquire the best of clothing and horse gear. Finally, after he had acquired 2 wives and some 30 or more horses, he became a subchief of the Small Robes band. As an old man he took the name of his Piegan benefactor, Boy. [553]

The practice of medicine offered a specialized medium of advancement for young women as well as men. A number of highly respected women practitioners were remembered by informants. Through their own visions and/or the teachings of established doctors young people learned the use of various medicinal plants and techniques of their administration. The person who could cure the sick or foresee the future was able to demand payments for his services in horses and other valuables.

Some men and women were able to better their condition through their skill as craftsmen. No individual was remembered who attained wealth solely on the basis of his or her skill in crafts. However, there were men and women of the middle class whose incomes were materially enhanced through their ability to manufacture bows and arrows or pipes of high quality (in the case of men), or lodges, clothing, riding and transport gear (in the case of women). Many fine craftsmen were older men whose age prevented their active participation in hunting or horse raids.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

THE BAND

Wissler (1911, p. 22) properly considered the band "the social and political unit" among the Blackfoot. In 1856, Blackfoot Agent Hatch stated, "Each tribe is divided into bands, which are governed or led by either a chief or a band-leader, the former office is hereditary, the latter depends upon the bravery of the individual and his success in war" (U. S. Comm. of Ind. Affairs, 1856, p. 625). Bradley's ex-

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

buffalo horse, was the greatest asset of the race horse, for the course, as a rule, was a lengthy one. No other horse was as highly prized by the Blackfoot as was the winning racer.

Indirectly the horse influenced other forms of Blackfoot recreation. I have described (pp. 236–238) the introduction of horse symbolism into the intersociety hoop and pole game. The common employment of valuable horses as stakes in gambling must have encouraged interest in other games of chance even though the games themselves may have been known to the Blackfoot in earlier times.

INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL LIFE

During the Pedestrian Culture Period, when men literally stood on an equal footing, class distinctions must have been less marked than in historic times. The cooperative hunt was an organization of near equals in which the kill was equally divided among participating families. Limited transportation facilities inhibited the accumulation of property and militated against social stratification based upon wealth. Undoubtedly individuals who achieved outstanding war records or possessed supernatural powers to call the buffalo (beaver bundle owners), to cure the sick, or to perform acts of magic attained positions of distinction and leadership which ranked them above the average man.

After the introduction of horses permitted the accumulation of property, social status came to depend less upon a man's physical and mental qualities and more upon the number and quality of his possessions. A class system began to develop in which there were rich, middle-class, and poor families, distinguished primarily on the basis of their relative wealth or poverty in horses.

The rich man owned not only the most horses but generally the best ones as well. Wealth in horses permitted rich men to care for and use their animals so as to increase their numbers and enhance their value. Rich men owned the largest and best-furnished lodges, the finest clothing, and the most sacred and valuable medicine bundles. They also enjoyed certain privileges denied the other classes. They had the widest choice of mates in marriage and could take the most wives. They could even get away with murder by presenting horses to relatives of the deceased man. On the other hand, the rich man was expected to accept responsibilities which men of the other classes did not shoulder. He was expected to assist the poor through gifts of food and horses and loans of horses for buffalo hunting and moving camp. He was expected to be generous in his hospitality and liberal in his barter with others. Probably no one was more genuinely disliked by the majority of the Blackfoot than the stingy man of wealth.

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 BIackfoot NF6

Blackfoot Indians of the middle class shared the advantages of that higher standard of living made possible by the ownership and use of horses. Generally their possessions were more modest in number, size, and/or quality than those of rich people, but they were surely finer and more numerous than those of the average Blackfoot in pre-horse times. The middle-class man possessed the means to enable him to participate fully in the social, economic, and religious life of his band and tribe. On rare occasions he might need assistance from his relatives in assembling horses for gifts or purchases.

It is questionable, however, whether the poor were not worse off than they would have been in the Pedestrian Culture Period. Their possessions actually may have been no more meager than were those of the average family in earlier times. But during the Horse Culture Period their lodges, clothing, weapons, etc. were so inferior as to make their living definitely substandard. Lack of horses alone prevented them from hunting buffalo or moving camp with their fellows unless they received assistance through loans of horses by wealthy relatives or band leaders. They became dependent followers of the leader who offered them most in economic security. Their poverty denied them participation in many activities which previous writers have considered typical of Blackfoot culture in general, such as the companionship of polygamous marriage, membership in societies, the wearing of elaborately decorated dress clothing, and the manipulation of complex and powerful sacred bundles.

Yet under the conditions of life prevailing in buffalo days the Blackfoot class system did not become crystallized. Hazards beyond their control prevented members of the wealthy class from becoming permanently entrenched. Enemy horse raiders, winter storms, or disease might wipe out the rich man's herd quickly and without warning. Buffalo-Back-Fat's sage advice to members of his family (pp. 241–242) to invest heavily in valuable other than horses, might have counteracted the damaging effects of such losses upon social status had it been more widely followed. If wealth might be short-lived, poverty need not be permanent for the poor young man who possessed ambition and courage. Through aggressive action, in repeated raids upon enemy camps, he might acquire the horses necessary to raise both his economic and social status. The rise of poor but ambitious young men as well as the fall of unfortunate wealthy families kept the class system fluid.

Women's status was decidedly improved as a result of the acquisition of horses. Women were emancipated from the toil of carrying heavy burdens in moving camp and from active participation in prolonged hunts afoot. Some of the time and energy they saved may have been devoted to the perfection of arts and crafts for which there must have been an increased demand, now that people could transport

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CHAPTER XI

THE BICULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESERVATION COMMUNITY: STATUS

Introduction

177 184 571 121 If the orientation categories each have their own associational patterns and value systems, then it remains to show that they each also have the third attribute required by Linton's definition of society--patterns of social organization.[187] The social organizations of the categories are not examined in detail. Rather the nature and separateness of the two systems are illustrated by reviewing the status patterns within each group. A man conforms to a particular set of values and adopts the related goals according to the group with which he wishes to identify. He acquires a higher or lower status within that group according to how well he exhibits those values. The status systems of the two orientational groups are examined to identify areas of contrast and to suggest the nature of intragroup leadership and social organization.

Status among the White-Oriented

565 177 184 The white-oriented society can be divided roughly into three status classes: low, middle, and high. Class boundaries are indistinct, but high status can be distinguished from low, while the middle class shades imperceptibly into the two extremes.

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[187] Linton, 1936, op. cit.

Low Status

184 177 565 Low status people, generally, are the least educated and least trained in the skills essential to regular employment. Consequently, they are often irregularly employed, live in poor houses, dress poorly, and have few possessions. Poverty is a condition shared by all low status people.

White and white-oriented people tend to lump low status people together regardless of orientation. While this is reasonable by many criteria, such judgements overlook cultural factors that make a white-oriented man different than his Indian-oriented counterpart. These distinguishing characteristics will be seen more clearly in the later discussion of the low status Indian-oriented.

[464] The low status stratum encompasses a range from hard working, but irregularly employed men at the top, to a few improvident individuals at the bottom of the scale.[188] The more ambitious of this class actively seek work and are considered to be good workers by those who know them. However, the jobs they find are seasonal and provide insufficient income for economic stability.

[167] [464] In general, low status men express little commitment to success and progress. One of the men interviewed had gone on relocation, but found the work too difficult so returned to his family. Another remarked that the relocation program was intended to help the Indian find work.

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[188] The hard working low status white-oriented are represented in the probability sample by Cases 3, 17, 29, and 28; two white-oriented idlers were identified and described by informants but none were in the sample.

184 He, with an average annual income of $2,250, had thought about going
177 on relocation, but never applied. "I don't have much trouble getting
● 565 a job," he said.
[167]

None of the low status men among the sample own their own
[464] homes. Two talked about fixing things up around home but had not made
[434] improvements that would be expected if they were concerned about
[356] material comfort. Housing appears to be poor and inadequate when eight
[342] to eleven people live in a two room shack. Yet the head of such a
[426] household responded to a question about the availability of Federal or Tribal home improvement loans by saying: "Yes they have a setup for that. I guess we could get a loan like that if we needed it."

When asked about future plans, these men have little to offer. They express little expectation beyond returning to the old job, or finding a similar one, each spring. The inference is that they are not dissatisfied with present conditions. Family responsibilities, lack of credit, uncertain employment, the weather and the seasons, are the factors that govern the economic condition of the low status men. It is unlikely that these men can be "successful" but they try; the idlers are those who have given up.

[735] The improvident ones, at the bottom of the scale, have lost any initiative they once might have had. Most of these, like their Indian-oriented counterparts, are called "winos" and "bums" by their fellow
[733] townsmen. Some are alcoholics in fact, others in name only. These men are community problem cases--the concern of the police and welfare authorities.

Yet these men are white-oriented in spite of the apparent lack of commitment to the values of their group. First of all they are

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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184 non-Indian. They know little or nothing of Indian language or customs,
177 and do not take part in Indian social activities. Secondly, the low
565 status white-oriented person has the knowledge and habits of his group. He is a peripheral participant in the economic, political, and social life of his community. Those who work are rewarded with the accolade, "a good worker," which puts them on a rung above the improvident on the status ladder. But they have little influence or social standing. Low status people do not run for political offices, they are neither members of service clubs or other organizations, nor do they take part in the P.T.A., Youth Club, Boy or Girl Scout, or 4-H Club work. Low status persons spend their spare time with members of their families or
[517] with others of similar status. Reported recreational activities include hunting and fishing, card games with neighbors or family, an occasional movie, and much time spent in driving around in a car with friends, having a few drinks, and ending up at someone's house to play cards and "hang one on."

Low income, irregular labor, and limited participation are the interrelated characteristics that most clearly separate the low from the middle status. Lack of training contributes to a low income; poverty, in turn, limits both self-improvement and social participation.

Middle Status, White-Oriented

This subdivision includes the majority of the white-oriented group and, in reality, is more a convenient collection of a series of gradually changing ranks than it is a single status position.[189] The

[189] Fourteen of the white-oriented cases were judged to be middle status: Numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 21, 25, 31, 34, 38, 42, 45, and 46.

184 people who occupy these status positions, however, share a few general
177 characteristics: (1) they are regularly employed, (2) are committed to
565 individual progress, (3) are active participants in community affairs, and (4) clearly support and exemplify the white-oriented values.

Individuals in this classification represent a wide range of
[463] economic and social achievement. Occupations of middle status people range from regularly employed craftsmen through clerical workers in business, Agency and Council to business men, politicians, small farmers and ranchers. Not all are financially independent, but all are building toward that goal. This is a characteristic that stands out in the interview materials. These people think about their future and the future of their children--they have plans for tomorrow. It shows in the "dream" of a poor white-oriented full-blood rancher who, by his industry, may just qualify for middle status:

> I think a lot when I'm alone. I have this dream to get some money and fix this place up right--a nice house and a good place. First, I'd get electricity in to pump the water. I had planned to remodel the house--my father built this a long time ago--to have a place I'm not ashamed of.

Yet while he dreams, this man acts. He cares for his small herd of thirteen head of cattle and a few horses, keeps the home and corral areas in good order, the wood pile well stocked, and the small cabin in good repair. His dream is also a future toward which he works.

At the upper end of the scale, this same concern for the future is expressed by the well-to-do rancher, quoted on page 155 who built up his ranch for the boys and was concerned that the youngest son had no future with the railroad. A

Middle status people join the service clubs, farm and cattle associations, and both support and participate in community improvement

A. [See Category 116, p. 155--Analyst]

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184 177 565 projects. The leaders in F.F.A., 4-H, Boy and Girl Scouts, and the Youth Club are either whites or tribal members of this class. These people sponsor the Easter Egg Hunts, the Fishing Derbies, local sports events and the rodeos. They are not always the leaders, but are the active supporters of community, church, and school enterprises.

Middle status people are active politically. Tribal Council positions, and a few county elective offices are sought and often won by people of this classification, and they are actively supported or opposed, advised or criticized, by their peers.

[356] Not all middle status persons have good homes, but evidence of improvement is apparent in the houses they do have. This may amount to anything from a fresh coat of paint on interior walls, to a new roof, a new entry way, or the addition of one or more rooms. In the home condition ratings on the socioeconomic data, two of the fourteen homes of white-oriented middle status sample members were [351] scored excellent and nine good. The middle status people do not all plant lawns and gardens, but with rare exceptions, all lawns and gardens are planted by middle or high status white or white-oriented people.

[511] Home improvement, and a tendency toward the acquisition of more [183] furniture, appliances, and other possessions with increased income, demonstrate the underlying values of acquisitiveness and material comfort. White-oriented people, above the low status category, buy,

use, and care for more home furnishings and appliances.[190] A middle class American would recognize an attempt to make the house "homelike"—a quality that is seldom achieved in the same way by the Indian-oriented regardless of financial condition. This elusive and hard to define impression may become clearer by contrast with Indian-oriented homes described later.

The white-oriented tend to identify home and possessions with family status. One white community leader, acquainted with sociological literature, assessed the class positions of the town, and used home improvement as a key to attempted upward mobility. Even Indian-oriented people are aware of this quality of white living. An Indian who acquires too many appliances and other home furnishings is accused of "trying to live like a white man."

White-Oriented High Status

Highest status among the white-oriented persons is held by a few men or families who own large farms or ranches, or operate successful businesses. In most respects they resemble the middle status people in that they are industrious, ambitious, acquisitive, and active in community

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[190] Some of this is reflected in the socioeconomic data. Twelve of the middle status white-oriented persons used gas, oil, or electric ranges, while only one of the three lower status, and none of the Indian-oriented subjects had other than wood ranges. Radios were widely owned, but a check shows that of those who reported no radios owned, six were Indian-oriented and one was white-oriented lower status. Television sets were owned by no Indian-oriented, one of three lower status white-oriented, eleven of fourteen middle status white-oriented, and all three upper status white-oriented families. These figures do not reflect properly the range of the Indian-oriented for reasons that will be shown later.

184 affairs. These people, however, stand out for their greater success.
177 They are financially independent, have larger, well-maintained, and
565 better furnished homes. They are leaders in community enterprises and politics and, further, they meet on more equal terms with the white business leaders of the community and region.

Three men among the sample are judged to be in this class (Cases 19, 30, and 35). In addition to the economic and social attributes just mentioned, these men share a broad knowledge of men and events beyond the local scene. Their interests lead them into contact with men of like interests beyond the reservation and county boundaries. They have traveled widely, have a lively interest in American history, politics, and business affairs.

The economic independence attained by these men has left them freer to pursue other affairs. They can afford to spend more time in public service work. All have become interested in improving the conditions of the reservation population. Two have learned about Blackfeet culture in later life, and display a great interest in the Indians. They know this culture intellectually but have not internalized an Indian point of view. These men have white values and goals and, whether they realize it or not, are working to change the Indians toward a greater acceptance of white ways. Like the government officials, they feel that the opportunity for steady work and a good education will solve most of the problems faced by the Indian. One man thoughtthe Council should buy some grass and flower seed to give to all the householders in town.

> If the Council would do this and encourage the people to plant the seeds it would make a big difference in the appearance of

184 the neighborhood and help develop their interest in the
177 improvement of homes and yards.
565 It will be seen that this man's suggestion is realistic from the point of view of his own values, but that he is unaware that the Indians do not share these same values.

184 Another of the high status white-oriented men has a different
177 view of the Indian. He learned most of what he knows about the Blackfeet
565 as a child during a few years he spent with an Indian grandmother and
186 her second husband, a full-blood Indian, on a Canadian reserve. He, who before and after this visit, was raised in a completely white-oriented home, was at that time trained intensely to be a future Blackfeet medicine man. As a consequence of this training and the considerable participation in Indian society that it allowed, he has a deeper understanding of the Indian-oriented people. His idea of service is to help them maintain their own culture. He is able to take part in their ritual and social activities, but serves primarily at a managerial level with the local and national committees that promote pan-Indian celebrations, arts, and crafts. This man is white-oriented, but has had experience that enables him to empathize with the Indian. He helps the Indian-oriented to affirm their traditions, while others of his class can only affirm their own and try to help the Indians by changing them.

177 Perhaps because of their greater association with white people,
184 the high status white-oriented, and a few in the class below who approach
565 this status, are the ones most conscious of social discrimination. All subjects were given an opportunity to express themselves on this, and people at this social level had the strongest feelings about it. The

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177 complaints were less about discrimination in the economic sphere than
184 about social slights. One man stated that everyone gets on well until
565 some white businessman's daughter becomes too interested in a mixed-blood boy. The white parents soon step in and break it up. A woman complained that she is never invited to local women's meetings, teas or other parties, and a study of membership and attendance lists for social groups sponsored by the white business people and Agency employees appears to support her contention. The high status white-oriented person is economically and culturally the same as many of his white neighbors. He aspires, and is qualified, to be fully accepted. Away from home he meets little discrimination, but in the local and neighboring towns his Indian heritage is held against him. This discrimination, felt strongly by the persons most nearly integrated into the American society, emphasizes again that the major difference between the white-oriented segment of the tribe and other American people around them is due to their being legally defined Indians, members of an Indian tribe who live on a reservation. This degree of identification suffices to create a social separation between them and white Americans.

The status levels of the white-oriented community reflect the scale by which white or white-oriented people assess themselves and their neighbors, and these are congruent with the status patterns of the region.[191] The white-oriented people are socially, politically,

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[191] The status levels are defined relative to the reservation. As a matter of interest the probability sample was rated by the "Index of Status Characteristics" developed by Warner and his associates (W. Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker, and Kenneth Eells, Social Class in America: A Manual of Procedure for the Measurement of Social Status

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177 economically and culturally, a part of the mainstream of American
184 life.
565
[186] As the white-oriented share status and value systems with the white people, they tend to assess the Indians by these same standards. The white-oriented person will depress one level his assessment of an Indian who is, in most respects, his equal. The improvident Indian is ranked lower than an improvident white. The white-oriented people measure all others by their own standards, in relation to themselves and their kind.

The Indian-oriented person, however, sees the relative status of the tribal members from quite a different perspective. Social worth is measured by different standards in Indian-oriented society, and the standards reflect commitment to other values.

Status among the Indian-Oriented

[186] The people of one segment of the Blackfeet Tribe consider themselves the real Blackfeet Indians[192] and dedicate themselves to

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(Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1949), pp. 121-159. The use of scales of occupation, source of income, house type, and dwelling area with data from the sociocultural schedule produced a white man's view of the tribal status structure. The individual rankings ranged from Warner's Lower-Lower class up through the Upper Middle class. This seemed reasonable. Ethnic factors might affect the accuracy of prediction of an individual's exact position compared to that of a man in a nonreservation town, but the differences did not appear to be too great. The low status white-oriented that were identified above measure Lower-Lower on Warner's scale. The middle status people ranged from Upper-Lower to Middle-Middle, while the high status white-oriented men ranked as Upper-Middle class. The Indian-oriented sample members rated Lower-Lower.

[192] Ewers, 1958, op. cit., p. 328, attributes this belief to the full-bloods in the concluding paragraph of his history of the Blackfeet.

177 being Indian. Toward this end they share elements of culture that
184 differ from that of the surrounding population and associate most
565 frequently with people of like orientation. The group has its own
[186] measures of status based upon expressions of the values supported by
[554] its members, and because of differing goals and values, the status system of the Indian-oriented is incongruent with that of the white-oriented society. The Indian judges his group, and the whole tribal population by another standard that results in a dissimilar ranking.

For present purposes the same threefold classification of status--low, middle, and high--is used, but because the Indian system has some peculiarities the positions are discussed in another order.
[554] In Indian-oriented society, high status is achieved by the attainment of prestige and influence through behavior that expresses the values of the group. This is the same general principle that operates among the white-oriented society, but the bicultural situation, in which the Indian-oriented are an economically and politically dependent minority, has led to a bifurcation of ranks among the higher status classes. Low status people are relatively homogeneous, middle status less so, and the high status category can be split into two types
[128] based upon differences of individual acculturation. Because of this the high status classes are described first, then the low status, followed by a brief description of the large middle class that, by its judgements and support, makes or breaks status claims. The discussion of the characteristics that make for the achievement of high status will describe best the ideals of the society against which the lower rankings are also measured.

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

High Status[193]

177 184 565 554 The joint requirements of maintaining Indian identity and achieving this within the political and economic framework of white culture have opened two channels to prestige and leadership within the Indian-oriented group. The ideal leader in this situation would be a man wise in the ways of both traditional Blackfeet and modern American cultures. He would be an authority on how best to be an Indian, yet well educated, skilled, and able to meet the white man on common ground. He would be experienced sufficiently to gain acceptance and influence in white society and to act as an able interpreter of each group to the other. The history of Blackfeet and American relations is too short to have produced such an ideal in one man. 177 184 565 554 571 Instead, as more and more tribal members become white-oriented, some men gain high status by their greater knowledge of Blackfeet culture, as it is known today. These leaders form a least acculturated high status stratum that, for the sake of simplicity, will be called the Chiefs. Others, better educated and more experienced with white culture, find high status by playing the roles of intercultural interpreters and mediators. They are accomplished spokesmen for the Indian-oriented point of view, and as a more acculturated high status class are labeled Interpreters. There are more than generational differences between these two status types.

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[124] [115] [193] No high status Indian-oriented persons were included in the probability sample, but the investigator was acquainted with several such people, observed and informally interviewed them. The small number of such people make their inclusion in a small random sample unlikely. However, the names of three such men were included in the first two hundred names drawn, but were not of the first fifty selected for interview.

177 184 565 554 [186] Chiefs[194] are usually older men who know and support the currently known traditions and beliefs. They vary in their knowledge, belief and dedication, but all, together, form a repository of what is remembered of the old ways. One of these men recognized that much of the old culture had been lost, "things beyond the memory of even the old timers," but he and others of his status are "trying to show the young people the things from the past," with special emphasis on keeping the language alive.

Through their age, knowledge, and practice of Blackfeet ideals, these men have gained the respect of a numerous following of kinsmen, friends and people from a particular region who recognize him as their Chief, or respected elder. So these men are given respect and loyalty but little political power. It appears that the old leadership structure persists among the Indian-oriented group. People tend to shift their loyalties according to kinship, friendship, and self-interest. The leadership that develops carries responsibilities and influence, but rarely true authority. The Chiefs are recognized as links to the past, authorities on tradition, and symbols of the Indian but, as the roles given them will show, these things are peripheral to the present political and economic sphere.

Chiefs perform a variety of public duties that center around [292] their position as authorities on tradition. Such men serve on the

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[194]It is estimated that this category includes twelve or fifteen men (and possibly two or three women attain the ideal if not the title). It is a reasonable prediction that socioeconomic data about them would place these people in the top rank of Indian-orientation and in a relatively low position on the non-Indian scale. [291] Most of these people wear some article of clothing or ornamentation--moccasins, tall-crowned hats, feather fans or charms--that symbolize [293] an Indian.

177 Indian Days committee where they try to insure that the ceremonies
184 are properly Indian; they help in planning the program and in the
565 regulation of the camp; they don ceremonial regalia, usually a beaded
554 white deerskin suit and a Plains Indian headdress, to take part in the
[292] dancing and exhibitions that make up the program.

[796] If a Sun Dance is held, it can be sponsored only by people of this class, the principle roles will be filled by the Chiefs and their families; they know the songs, dances and the ritual necessary for the performance of a ceremony that follows tradition as closely as their knowledge and modern conditions will allow.

Such Chiefs are called upon to greet distinguished visitors and to officiate in adoption ceremonies in which visiting dignitaries are given an Indian name and taken into the Blackfeet tribe. If any family wishes to hold a give-away, a Chief is called upon to be the crier, the one who announces the import of the ceremony, leads in chanting the proper songs, and calls out the names of those honored with a gift.

[778] Several of these men own medicine bundles that they open on the proper occasions, and they help conduct the ceremonies at the bundle
[755] openings of other people. A few know curing practices and rituals and conduct curing ceremonies even though they and their patients also go to white doctors.

[643] Some of the Chiefs serve on the Honorary Tribal Council and
[664] receive a small per diem for attendance at Council meetings. Members of this Honorary Council are chosen frequently to accompany delegations to the state and national capitols to lobby for or against proposed

177 184 565 554 [664] legislation that might affect the Tribe. On these trips these men dress in their regalia and pose for pictures with government officials. They are symbols of the American Indian seeking redress of ancient wrongs.

Both in the council and on such trips, the Chiefs see themselves as spokesmen for the full-bloods and take every occasion to speak out, usually in Blackfeet, urging harmony and trust, and requesting more help for "the People"--the full-bloods.

177 184 565 554 643 [888] Few people, even among their followers, accept this political role of the Chiefs. The persons in the audience talk, move about and impatiently pass the time until the Honorary Councilmen have had their say. On one occasion, the Chairman asked the translator to "tell him to make it short." The people, in general, take pride in their old timers, but want them to exercise their influence outside of Council.

[191] They are handicapped, too, as political leaders because they speak little English and so fail to communicate directly with many of the people they seek to influence. They wish to arrive at decisions by the traditional council method that requires lengthy discussion and unanimity. The dominant culture and society within which they must act, the white and white-oriented leaders that must be influenced, do not allow time for this method of resolving issues. The men are extended the courtesy of free speech, but this does not include giving much attention to what they say.

177 184 565 554 These men have attained this status by the routes of wisdom, skill and generosity. Wisdom and skill have developed through their experience. Their fathers, as youths, saw the last of the buffalo days

177 and told their sons about that life, so their tie with the past is
184 real. The Chiefs have lived through three-quarters of a century of
554 the changes described in Chapter V, so the wisdom they profess has a
● 565 basis in experience with the white man. They were active participants
in the trials of change, having tried many of the programs for economic
readaptation with varying degrees of success. In the course of these
economic ups and downs, these men accepted some change, but also tried
to maintain the traditions as they knew them. Their ability to do this
has made them both the advisers and symbols they now are for numbers of
people.

The high status position of these men is fairly stable, but
[571] still depends on the numbers and support of their followers. Their
[431] claims to status must be validated by continued service and acts of
[556] generosity. They are not wealthy, but they have shared what they had
in better times and perform services presently that validate their
positions.

177 The Chiefs do not present a united front, and are still rivals
184 for additional prestige. They criticize one another and are gossiped
554 about by other people. One old man will dismiss the tales of another
565 as "lies." "He doesn't know anything. The truth is . . . ." Another
578 will be criticized for telling war stories. "He once put a story in
[424] the paper about how he scalped a Crow Indian . People laugh at him.
He shouldn't tell those stories, they don't belong to him. My daddy
told me not to tell these war stories, they're the property of the
people who did the things."

177 The Chiefs, then, are honored for their ability to symbolize
184 and to advise about and maintain these traditions. The knowledge and
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177 experience that has gained them this status, however, cannot be
184 translated into effective, practical political and economic leadership,
●565 so that another type of Indian-oriented leader must fill this gap.
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[191] Interpreters[195] form a more acculturated high status class made up of relatively younger men who are better educated, were raised in Indian-oriented homes, speak both languages fluently, and have assumed, or gained, leadership roles in the community. They express the ambition to "make a life by combining what is best of the Indian way with the best of the white way." They are capable of fitting into a role made necessary by the reservation complex wherein two contrasting societies attempt to function under a common political system. They can talk to
[186] and better understand both sides. At the same time, these leaders are Indian-oriented. They want to be accepted by the Indian society and want to maintain Indian identity, but both the bicultural milieu and their personal qualities lead to an understanding and participation that differs from that of the Chiefs.

The Interpreters know much of the old religion and lore. Quite often their fathers had been of the Chief class and these men had been

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[195] This class includes approximately fifteen men (and possibly three women) who range from thirty to seventy years of age. The younger ones best represent the present state of the bifurcation process. Each generation of acculturated Indian-oriented leaders has had greater opportunity for a better education and for more experience with white ways. This increasing individual acculturation widens the gap between these men and the least acculturated, but makes them more competent in transactions with the dominant society. If the sample had included men of this class, they would have measured high on both scales of orientation and, undoubtedly, would have been plotted in the B quadrangle of Figure 1.2. These men are highly acculturated, but Indian-oriented, a finding that will require discussion in the concluding chapter.

A. [See Category 116, pp. 89-92--Analyst]

177 taught some of the traditions in their homes. But they are not
184 committed, openly at least, to the old religion. They are members, and
565 often leaders, of Christian churches. Those who are Catholics look for
554 elements in Catholicism that support Indian values and they are adept at
177 finding Christian analogs for Blackfeet beliefs. Others have joined
184 minor Protestant churches and stress that the predominant Indian
565 attendance at these makes them Indian churches. There is some evidence
554 that many Indian-oriented persons are changing church affiliation
771 frequently and that this is caused possibly by a search for a white
795 church that is most congruent with the Blackfeet religion.[196]

177 The Interpreters participate in Indian ceremonies and are
184 given parts to play in the Sun Dance. They do not have the traditional
565 wisdom required for the roles, but they are Indian leaders who are
554 sympathetic and "good." They tend to express Indian values, and sub-
[796] scribe to Indian symbols. Interpreters put up a tepee for Indian Days,
[186] wear a Chiefly costume on appropriate occasions, stress their Indian
names and belong to a men's society.

In addition to their Indian training, these men have had the opportunity to get a good education in American schools, to travel and otherwise become experienced with much of white culture. They are capable of competing with the white-oriented, and through ability, hard work and some economic success, are well accepted by the white-oriented community. They could succeed on their own in any rural off-reservation community. The Interpreters are not wealthy. They usually earn good

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[794] [196] The Blackfeet have not accepted the peyote cults even though these are active in reservations in the surrounding region.

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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177 184 565 554 salaries in Agency or Council positions but they use this income to help support a family ranch. Their less acculturated kinsmen work the ranch in return for some financial support. All share in the profits and losses from the enterprise.

Because of their Indian-orientation, however, they must curb [626] their economic ambitions in order to maintain their status. The very capabilities that make them valuable leaders within their group subject [561] them to constant surveillance and criticism. In addition, their youth [888] is held against them. In the past, status through wisdom came with age [571] and in the eyes of many of their people they are wise too soon. So these men cannot acquire too much; they must be generous and helpful, and build a following that will attest to their wisdom, skill and generosity in future years.

It is possible that in later life these men might take over the positions of custodians of tradition as these become vacated by the present Chiefs, but this is doubtful, even though some people occasionally refer to them as "young Chiefs." The tentative prediction would be that high status positions of both types will be filled from below where the factors of relative education and experience tend to produce differential acculturation within the Indian-oriented society. As will be seen later, people of lower status already give indications as to how these positions will be filled.

Low Status[197]

Low status Indian-oriented people can be described by characteristics greatly similar to those of the same status in white-oriented

[197]Three of the eight Indian-oriented subjects in the probability sample are ranked in this class (Cases 10, 32, and 47).

177 society. These people are poor. Some are hard workers and others
184 improvident, but lack of training limits these men to irregular wage
565 labor. They do not find regular seasonal jobs but must take work where
554 and when they can find it. Several of the improvident ones, like their
[464] white-oriented counterparts, are called "bums and winos" and are problem cases for the authorities. But there is a difference between men of the differing orientations even at the lowest status level. They face in different cultural directions, and the indices show that the Indian-oriented low status man is more a part of his society than the lower class white man is in his.

In contrast with the white-oriented group, economic factors fail to separate the low from many of the middle status people in Indian-oriented society. Irregular work, low income, poorly maintained and crowded houses are characteristics shared by people variously ranked on the status scale. The ultimate criterion for status assignment is social participation.

Low status people do not take part in as many social activities as do the people of higher positions; they are often present, but usually as onlookers. It is significant, however, that they are not isolated from their group as is often the case with the improvident white-oriented person. The low status Indian-oriented man is welcome
[627] to attend Indian activities if he behaves. If he misbehaves he is eased out, perhaps locked up in the jail, but people do not disown him for this. They joke about it as if his actions were to be expected, and welcome him back when he settles down. If he behaves he may be given a job to do, such as ushering, police duty, or helping with the

A.I.I e . low-status Indian-oriented people--Analyst]
A

177 serving of the food. He is one of them, perhaps a kinsman, at least
184 a familiar person in the community and he is given some community
565 support.
554

These men have much spare time and spend a great deal of it
[273] in the streetcorner groups. If they, or one of their friends, has a little cash or can beg some from a tourist, they will buy a bottle of wine and get drunk. Such loafing and drinking groups are made up of Indian-oriented people.

177 These men fill a traditional and expected status. The Blackfeet
184 had, in the past, a few improvident and unfortunate people who lacked
565 the "power" to succeed. This was not held against them and it was a
554 social duty to see that they did not starve. The low status people of
571 today are treated in much the same way; they are thought of as unlucky
735 and not entirely responsible for their condition. They may stir up
[626] trouble but the tendency is to keep the quarrels within the group; they are criticized, admonished but not ostracized. White and white-oriented persons let the more impersonal authorities deal with the low status trouble makers and expect relief to take care of the shiftless ones. The Indian-oriented group feels a responsibility for their own low status people. They are "our people" and "we" take care of them. Family and group responsibility does not end when authorities step in, and the improvident are cared for regardless of welfare. The aid may be given grudgingly but it is forthcoming.

14: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1960) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

Middle Status[198]

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The majority of the Indian-oriented group are assigned to a middle status that encompasses a broad range of individual differences. The same qualities requisite for high status count here, and conformity to Indian values is more important than economic condition.

These are the people who live the Indian-oriented life described in the previous chapters; who practice the Indian-oriented values and both support and take part in the Indian-oriented society. The middle class actively supports the leaders of their choice in both the traditional and the modern spheres and differ from the lower status people because of their more complete involvement in the life of the [626] community. It is the attitudes, opinions, acts and wants of these people that assign and validate social status; they are the Indian-oriented public that awards some men with loyalty and influence and penalizes others with gossip, criticism and shame.

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This class includes people with a wide range of knowledge of and skills in the traditional culture, and in education and experience with the white. These differentials of acculturation establish both limitations on and possibilities for upward mobility for these people. The poorly educated person cannot expect to gain high status of the Interpreter type, and as a consequence they are most apt to follow the pattern established by the Chiefs. There is evidence in the behavior of several men that they have such ambitions. They have quit drinking and "chasing around," and have become active in a men's society, a dancing or singing group, and are learning more of the old culture from association with the Chiefs. They serve on committees

198 Five of the subjects in the probability sample are assigned to middle status (Cases 14, 18, 26, 27, and 39).

177 that plan and stage the Indian Days celebration and holiday dances,
184 and attempt to live up to the highest values of the group. Their
565 families are supporting them in this move. The brother of one such
554 man spoke of him proudly:
555

> My brother quit drinking twenty years ago and learned Indian singing. He won a singing contest and now he's a champion singer. He's the boss.

[626] Others support the similar ambitions of one of their relatives; they say that this man "isn't so much of a singer" and that he really "doesn't know much" about Blackfeet ways. His ambitions are being challenged as a part of the validation process he must go through.

Several younger men appear to be grooming for the more acculturated high status positions. They are already learning Blackfeet traditions from their elders, and at the same time are applying themselves to their education. The valedictorian of the high school class of 1960 appears to be a likely candidate for a position as an Interpreter. He is continuing his education and gaining experience in American society; he is fluent in both languages, and he has been a good student of Blackfeet culture. His Indian-oriented accomplishments and success in school already have gained him the respect of the Indian-oriented, and his school accomplishments, in turn, have earned him the respect of many in the white and white-oriented community.

[191]

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177 Much of the description of modern Indian-oriented life is based
184 upon participant observation among people of this middle status, and
565 familiarity with this group sheds light on a question raised earlier
554 about the Indian attitude toward material comfort and possessions. It
353 was mentioned that the Indian-oriented appeared to have fewer possessions,
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511
[123]

177 and gave them less care than did the white-oriented. Their houses were
184 said to lack a "home-like" quality familiar to a middle class American.
565 The observation of middle status Indian-oriented people gave support to
554 these statements.
353
183 The observer visited many kinds of Indian homes and found one
511 characteristic common to all, regardless of the size of the house or the financial standing of the owner. They were places in which to sleep and eat, but gave little evidence of any concern for comfort. Several homes had "everything"--a davenport, overstuffed chair, refrigerator, lamps, radio and television. In these homes, however, the furniture appeared to be little used, the lamps and appliances were apt to be out of order and poorly maintained. Other parts of the house gave evidence of more care. Beds were neatly made and kitchen areas were orderly and clean. Both bedrooms and kitchens showed signs of being lived in. Family photographs, religious calendars and pictures, and Remington prints decorated the walls and tops of chests of drawers. Visiting with family and friends is done outside, or in the kitchen if the weather is bad.

The present data do not reveal why Indian-oriented people buy appliances and furniture. Perhaps they recognize these as white status symbols. Nevertheless, some Indian-oriented people buy these "material comforts," but their use and care of them suggest that they are not highly valued among that group.

Summary

177 In review, the Indian-oriented society is seen to have a differ-
184 ing set of values than the white-oriented group, and their judgements of
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177 prestige, influence and status rankings, based upon these values,
184 contrast with the white-oriented appraisal of social worth. The
571 different status patterns, and the part the men of different status
554 positions play in the daily life of the tribal community, indicate
565 that each group has its own social structure.

177 to take care of themselves and rarely turn to people outside their
184 immediate family for help.
571
183 White-oriented persons work toward future goals. They want to build toward the social and economic betterment of themselves and their children and believe that this can be accomplished best by education, hard work and acquisitiveness. To this end they build ranches, farms or businesses, or hold a good steady job. Acquisitiveness is evidenced in the ownership and maintenance of property, homes, furnishings and equipment that contribute to economic independence, material comfort, and serve also to symbolize, both to the individual and others, the degree of success achieved.

Persons of this orientation associate mainly with people of similar orientation and aspire toward full participation in white
[186] society. Such aspirations often are thwarted both because white people identify the white-oriented with an Indian stereotype, and they see themselves as "Indians" in opposition to "white men" when the privileges of Indian status are under attack. The aspirations are realistic, however, because in most respects the white-oriented segment of the Blackfeet tribe is similar to and capable of being an integral part of American society.

[171] A brief investigation of the status system within this group revealed a pattern similar to the general American class structure. Like other Americans, white-oriented people make their judgements of individual worth according to standards and values introduced and
[565] maintained by the dominant society. One can conclude that the white-oriented society among the Blackfeet is organized around a series of

177 class norms. An individual who aspires to belong to this society
184 will find social support to the extent that he approximates the
571 behavior set by these norms and displays a commitment to the goals
183 and values of the group.
[565]

Indian-Oriented Society

The patterns of the Indian-oriented society group stand out clearly despite the many features shared with both white and white-oriented society, and especially in the areas of contrasting goals
[186] and values. The major goal of this group is to retain its ethnic identity. Traditional values, and particularly the value placed upon generosity, persist and serve as both symbols of being Indian, and a check against the achievement necessary for full economic integration with the dominant society.

This goal tends to make the Indian-oriented Blackfeet past rather than future oriented. They assert tradition, a tradition made up of remembered Blackfeet culture, borrowed pan-Indian elements and incorporated elements from white culture. The future is uncertain for most Indian-oriented people; past experience has made them suspicious of long-range plans. Consequently, the tendency is to avoid risking present positions for unknown future benefits, to live each day as it comes and to remember real and legendary better days of the past.

177 The Blackfeet Indian-oriented society is organized in conformity
184 to these goals, values and expectations. A man is judged by his display
571 of Indian traits and particularly by how generous he is with the fruits
183 of his achievement. Expressions of such judgements were recorded and
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177 184 571 183 554 565 used to construct a scale of status, from low to high, and the resulting class structure appeared unrelated to similar levels in both the general American society and the white-oriented Blackfeet group.

Of particular importance, as an indication of Indian-oriented accommodation to the bicultural milieu, is the bifurcation apparent in the Indian system that led to the identification of two high status classes--the Chiefs and the Interpreters. The Chiefs attain influence because of their knowledge of the past; they represent continuity with the Blackfeet forebears and the traditional culture. The Interpreters, on the other hand, are supported because of their knowledge of and experience with both cultures, which enables them to mediate between the subordinate and dominant groups.

The Indian-oriented society in these ways provides tribal members with an alternative route to influence and higher status--another set of class norms regulating the behavior of persons who wish to associate with people who aspire to be Indians. Approximation of these norms and evidence of commitment to the values and goals of the group will help a man gain acceptance and social support from this society.

177 184 571 121. Two hundred and thirty years of acculturation has resulted in a bicultural community held together by special bonds. Acculturation has not resulted in tribal disorganization, but in a reorganization that accommodates the simultaneous persistence of many traditional social and cultural characteristics from both interacting societies. A large part of the tribe has adopted the culture of the dominant society and aspires to assimilate. A smaller number, for reasons

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
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Our basis for making this list is the assumption that there were 190 families on the reserve in 1939-40. Each male owner of property is presumed to support a family, and the eight women who hold title to cattle, horses, or both are subtracted from the totals of the various classes. We assume that they are contributing to the support of one of the groups with property.

It is, of course, impossible to infer accurately from the foregoing statistics the welfare of any of these groups. To own horses, cattle, and land does not guarantee a stable income, for the stock or size of the farm may be such as to make a very unsatisfactory return. Moreover, even though a man may own cattle and horses in considerable numbers, there may be many months when he is no better off than the poorest. On the other hand we are acquainted with individuals, mainly in a middle-aged or younger group, who own none of these kinds of property, yet who receive stable and satisfactory incomes from wages. As a group, those possessing horses, cattle, and property are fairly well situated; those having only horses and cattle are also fairly well off. Assuming that two-thirds of the members of both groups possess an amount of property necessary for a satisfactory income, we can say that one-third of the families on the reserve are inadequately provided for.

Let us review the sociological results of this type of distribution of wealth. Here we are particularly interested in wealth, but we wish to show that in general possession of wealth is an index of class, so that speaking of class and of rich and poor persons is nearly the same. The Blackfoot distinguish three classes of people: high-class (*ot(o)tamapsi*), middle-class (*soxkitapsi*), and low-class (*sawanitapsi*). An informant indicates the behaviour of high-class persons:

> It is not in the form of war but in the form of riches. A man will aim to go through all the societies (age and religious) and get ahead of all others. If he succeeds, he is a high class person. When he has respect, he has good manners, is kind to people, says things that are so in the right way. He is kind to the old, takes care of the horses, has not much to do but eat and hunt. He has good regalia, invites people frequently, does not gossip much.

The informant seems here to refer obliquely to pre-reserve days, but his and other statements show that he is also speaking about the contemporary scene. The main emphasis is on the acquisition of sacred objects and society memberships, yet a gracious behaviour towards others, ability to maintain sources of wealth, and the possession of a well-equipped household enter also. From these state-

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

565 ments we deduce three main criteria of class: (1) the amount of property either in horses or cash; (2) the use of this wealth to buy sacred objects and society memberships; (3) the maintenance of good relations with other persons through generosity and social grace.

Of ten high-class people mentioned by an informant, eight own horses, cattle, and land, or make up for the lack of one of these by large holdings of horses and cattle, or land and horses. Of the remaining two, one has little property but a good number of religious possessions to his credit. The other, now relatively poor in property, has owned more sacred objects and society memberships than any other person on the reserve. The persons considered to be in the middle-class are invariably small property owners, but they also have owned some sacred objects and belong to societies. Of eight low-class people only one is moderately well off in that his son owns land, cattle, and horses. All others own little property. Their purchases of sacred objects are few, as are their memberships in societies. Two are Crees from the Cree minority on the reserve ("Crees" involves all the disabilities of a minority group) and this may partially reflect an old prejudice. Thus wealth seems to be an important aspect of class in Blackfoot society.

There is also a connotation of inferiority in the term "low-class." To be low-class or poor implies that one is lazy and has little ambition. On the other hand, to be rich implies that one has worked hard to acquire his property. So convinced are the Blackfoot that a man through personal industriousness can penetrate the barriers between classes, that they believe that those who do not meet this challenge prove themselves *ipso facto* inferior.

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

CHAPTER FIVE

The Political System

The Band Chieftains

In buffalo days all eminent persons of the tribe formed an upper class called "*ıstuyi*," i.e., those before whom one is ashamed. This is somewhat the equivalent of the contemporary "*ᵓototamapsi*."[1] Within the *ıstuyi* group there were many degrees of prestige, but it comprised mainly all the war chiefs and band chiefs. Occasionally men were found who were not warriors, but who, because of wisdom or supernatural power, enjoyed respected eminence. Anyone with the requisite number and types of war deeds was considered a war chief. The status of war chief is to be carefully distinguished from that of the chief of a band who played a more important function in the social structure of the tribe. Formerly the individual who became a band chief grew from the membership of the band. First, he had to become a war chief who distinguished himself, if not excelled, in feats of battle. This meant *ipso facto* that he was wealthy, for a successful war chief had horses, guns, and scalps which functioned as economic assets. Of these, a good herd of horses was essential. The second major criterion was that he be generous in the use of his wealth for the benefit of others. Anyone at any time might ask such a person for the loan of a horse, gun, or any other article necessary for hunting, war, or some emergency. The band chief or any potential band chief frequently handed out these articles, especially horses, as gifts to meritorious persons. Usually eventual reciprocity was expected, except in the case of the poor. The man of eminence also had to maintain a small group of young unmarried men to look after his horses and particularly to hunt for him in order to provide the extra meat needed for guests, widows, and other needy

[1] Cf. p. 101.